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# HOSTAGE-TAKING IN LEBANON

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Comments on the Taking of Western Hostages in Lebanon

Hundreds of Lebanese have been kidnapped in Lebanon in the last year and a half, and virtually every Lebanese faction has used kidnapping as a tactic in the ongoing struggle for power. The anarchic environment, particularly in much of Beirut, makes hostage-taking, of both particular individuals and especially targets of opportunity, relatively easy. Against this background, relatively few Westerners have been kidnapped, and to our knowledge, only radical Shia elements have deliberately targeted Westerners for abduction. In general, the evidence indicates that the kidnappers have not operated along a consistent, predictable pattern when kidnapping Westerners in Lebanon.

Hostage Traits

The only identifiable common trait of the Western victims is that they are Western and male. The only female abductee--the French national daughter of hostage Marcel Carton--was kidnapped briefly only because she insisted on accompanying her father. Westerners stand out in Beirut because their dress and appearance are distinctive and, as a result, they present good targets of opportunity. Some of the kidnappings appear to have been against pre-selected targets, but for the most part, it appears that the victims were picked up because they looked like Westerners.

Pre-Selected Targets or Targets of Opportunity

We believe that victims have been both pre-selected targets and targets of opportunity. The facts regarding some cases, i.e., the methods, timing of the kidnappings, and locations, suggest at least six hostages (William Buckley, Christain Jourbert, Frank Regier, Marcel Fontaine, and Alec Collett) were pre-selected targets which required at least some surveillance planning. The extent of surveillance is not known. The remainder were probably targets of opportunity. The fact that some Westerners who were seized were later released after their kidnappers determined they were not Americans would further substantiate this conclusion. The best examples of this were the recent abductions of British citizens who were released after they persuaded their captors they were not Americans.

Analysis of Modus Operandi (MO) further suggests that at least two different groups have conducted kidnappings. There is also some evidence which suggests they may trade victims. In addition, criminal gangs have probably been contracted to carry out the kidnappings, or they simply seize a Westerner and then attempt to peddle their victim off. Our reporting, however, is not sufficient to allow us to make a definitive analysis of the MOs involved.

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Locations of Kidnappings

All of the Hizballah-related kidnappings have taken place in West Beirut. No particular neighborhood or area in West Beirut, however, seems to be more dangerous than any other. The abductions occurred literally all over West Beirut, from the airport on the southern end to the AUB campus on the northern section. The three most recent kidnappings (Sutherland, the French journalist, and researcher) have taken place at or near Beirut International Airport, but that could be coincidental. The airport is an obvious place to find Westerners--especially journalists and diplomats--and various sources report that the radical Shia look for potential victims among travelers arriving there.

Method of Kidnapping

The method of kidnapping has varied somewhat from victim to victim. Several of the hostages were taken from cars as they drove through West Beirut. The common scenario involves a carload of terrorists forcing the victim into their vehicle. Yet, Mr. Kilburn appears to have been taken from his apartment, and one of the French diplomats was taken after stopping at a newsstand.

Time of Day

We do not have complete information on many of the kidnappings, but, again, the time of day of abduction appears to have varied considerably.

Time Lag Between Kidnapping and Claim

The time lag has varied drastically--from less than a day to several months. No claim was made for the first group of hostages (Levin, Buckley, and Weir) for about two months. The Kilburn kidnapping in late November was not claimed until mid-January. Yet, the claims for the kidnappings of Jenco, Anderson, Jacobsen, and the French hostages came a week or less after the abductions.

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**Kidnapings of Westerners in Lebanon, 1984-85**  
(As of 10 April 1985)

Victim	Date and Place Kidnaped	Claimant Group	Fate
Frank Regier, US professor	10 February 1984, West Beirut	None	Rescued 15 April 1984 by Amal from an apartment controlled by Hizballah
Christian Joubert, French architect	15 February 1984, West Beirut	None	Rescued 15 April 1984 by Amal from an apartment controlled by Hizballah
Jeremy Levin, US journalist	7 March 1984, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Escaped 14 February 1985
William Buckley, US diplomat	16 March 1984, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Rev. Benjamin Weir, US minister	8 May 1984, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Pedro Aristegui, Spanish Ambassador	10 October 1984, West Beirut	None; Musa Sadr Brigade probably responsible	Released soon after abduction
John Cronin, US student	17 November 1984, West Beirut	None; group responsible unknown	Released 21 November after sustaining several beatings
Peter Kilburn, US librarian	30 November 1984, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Rev. Lawrence Jenco, US priest	8 January 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Geoffrey Nash, UK scientist	14 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad, Khaybar Brigades	Released 27 March by Khaybar Brigades
Rev. Nicolas Kluiters, Dutch priest	Last seen 14 March 1985, Bekaa Valley	"Vengeance Party"	Died of strangulation. Body found 2 April north of Baalabakk
Brian Levick, UK businessman	15 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad, Khaybar Brigades	Released 30 March 1985 by Khaybar Brigades after persuading captors he is British
Terry Anderson, US journalist	16 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Possibly held by Hizballah
Marcel Fontaine, French diplomat	22 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad, Khaybar Brigades	Reportedly held by radical Shias
Marcel Carton, French diplomat	22 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad, Khaybar Brigades	Reportedly held by radical Shias
Danielle Perez, French secretary at Embassy	22 March 1985, West Beirut	Islamic Jihad, Khaybar Brigades	Released 31 March by Khaybar Brigades
Alec Collett, UK journalist with UNRWA	26 March 1985, Khaldah	Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims (ROSM)	Probably held by ROSM
Gilles Peyrolles, French diplomat	24 March 1985, Tripoli	Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF)	Rescued (released?) 2 April
Jean Claude Duvent, French teacher	28 March 1985, West Beirut	None	Released soon after abduction, when found to be French
Robert Valnassian, French teacher	28 March 1985, West Beirut	None	Released soon after abduction, when found to be French
Aidan Walsh, UNRWA dep dir	15 May 85 W. Beirut	ROSM & Islamic Jihad	Rel. 16 May
Jean-Paul Kaufmann French journalist	23 May 85 W. Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Michael Saurat French researcher	23 May 85 W. Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
David Jacobsen Dir. AUH	28 May 85 W. Beirut	Islamic Jihad	Probably held by Hizballah
Thomas Sutherland AUB Dean	9 Jun 85 W. Beirut	None as of 13 June	Possibly held by Hizballah